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E-mail: generalate@sistersofcharity.nl**Reflection by sr. Hermin Bu'ulölö**

The reassuring words spoken by God's messenger to King David through the prophet Nathan can easily be addressed to each of us (2 Samuel 7:9): "I have been with you wherever you went." God always guides our lives, even when we don't feel the presence of the Divine. This lasting relationship is the result of the gift of God that Jesus came to live among us. In that short time, He did not act like a tourist or a guest. He incarnated himself as fully as possible in life on our earth. When Jesus left his human form, we found his animating presence in the Eucharist and his Love became our inner guide. As the celebration of Jesus' birth approaches, reading the Scriptures continues to convince us of His presence.

Advent is meant to awaken us to this remarkable reality, to focus our hearts on His presence. Advent has begun and we live in hope and expectation. We wait for the birth of Jesus. Expectations are important in everyone's life. They offer hope and confidence. A person without expectations is a person without ideals.

In order not to lose confidence, the letter of James (5:7-8) reads: *"Friends, be patient, and wait for the day when the Lord returns. Listen! In spring and autumn, a farmer waits for it to rain. Then everything will grow, and then he can reap a great harvest from the land. But until then, he's patient."*

It is now time to make a sincere effort to give the undivided attention of our hearts to our eternal friends who accompany us on our journey through life, step by step. This Advent we are invited to renew our hope.

How do we realize the presence of Christ in our lives today?



Working visit to USA

Sr. Elisângela and sr. Josephine were present at the USA provincial days. They met Sisters and Friends at the beach house. Sr. Barbara-Ann was present via ZOOM. The ICC was one of the topics to talk about. Particularly the part that dealt with the connectedness of sisters and lay. Because there was no representation from the USA at the ICC, Zr. Mel Ryley and Dana Sullivan (Friend) sent a video sharing their experiences with sisters and lay who attended the ICC.

Also discussed was the project of Brazil, USA and the Philippines that investigates the support between Brazil, the Philippines and the USA and the possibility of forming an international province. Together with sr. Mel Ryley, also sr. Elisangela and sr. Josephine forms the team that initiate this project. Except sr. Mel is also sr. Janice actively involved. She teaches English to the sisters in Brazil. The American sisters are very enthusiastic about the project.



The three initiators of the project have been physically together again since 2019. Consultations were therefore planned to discuss developments and prepare a report for the ICB. A special coincidence was the presence of sr. Paula from Brazil who was in Chicago for an intensive English course. Sr. Paula is also involved in this project.

Working visit UK/Ireland

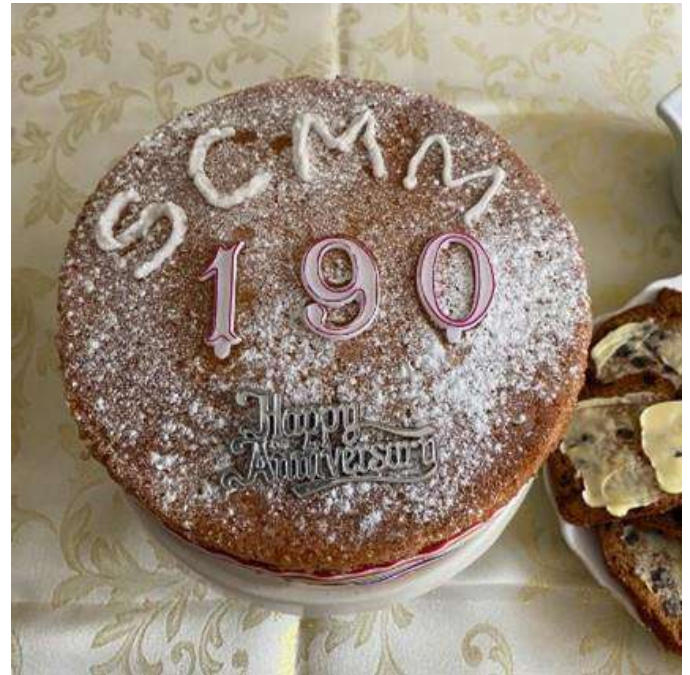


Contrary to the past, it took a very long time for sr. Hermin and sr. Josephine were granted a visa to visit the sisters in Pantasaph. They could therefore not attend the Province Days in August. They finally left for Wales in mid-October. Both sisters were warmly welcomed by sr. Marie Thérèse Croke. They visited the three sisters in Bryn Mair, who are all well cared for. The two sisters in Ireland are doing well given the circumstances. Both suffer from health problems.

Also sr. Marie-Thérèse is not completely healthy and draws attention to this vulnerable group of sisters.

There was conversation about the ICC that took place earlier this year and about the developments in the other countries, which the sisters really appreciated.

There was also an opportunity to celebrate the 190th anniversary of the Congregation with a Eucharistic celebration followed by a festive gathering in which the sisters and staff were also present.



ICB 2022



From 14 to 17 November, the participants of the ICB and financial meeting gathered in ZIN (Vught – The Netherlands). Just a few months ago, Sr. Donata Manalu was elected as Provincial Superior of Indonesia. It was her first time attending an ICB as provincial superior.

For the first time, Sr. Mel Ryley was accompanied by one of the Friends, Janet Labrecque. Also for the first time there was an online connection with Sr. Marie Thérèse Croke in Pantasaph (Great Britain) which also allowed her to participate in the conversations in smaller groups.

In her opening speech, Hermin emphasized that she thought it was important to see everyone in person again - after two meetings via ZOOM - and to talk together about the future of the Congregation in relation to the approaching General Chapter. A future that starts today!

The sisters all over the world were supportive, which was shown by the various inspiring wishes that were received. The expectations of the ICB members were hopeful and focused on connectedness across borders.

Annual Report General Council



The annual report of the General Council was discussed. Among other things, the developments in the various countries were discussed. Each superior was given the opportunity to give a short explanation to which those present could respond. There is a lot of interest in each other. For example, there were questions about the tasks and training of the associate members in Brazil, about the organization of

the various apostolates in Indonesia, about resuming activities after the pandemic in the Philippines and about the help Timor Leste needs now that the number of sisters growing fast.

It gradually became clear that the problems in the younger parts are very different from the older parts. Especially when the groups of older sisters are small, they also become vulnerable. This will certainly receive attention in the coming period.

ICC 2022

From June 6-15, sisters and lay met at an ICC in Nemi, near Rome, Italy. A report has been made on this, which has been discussed in the ICB. Many topics were discussed during the ICC, which were reflected upon and from which new paths and insights could possibly follow in this ever-changing world. Changes, which take place in different ways in each country. The ICB members were asked which themes are important in the coming period. Leadership, charisma & spirituality and lay involvement were identified as the most important topics. These topics will be included in the agenda for the General Chapter in 2023.

Project Formation international province

Since the general chapter of 2017 agreed to investigate whether close cooperation between a few small parts could lead to the formation of an international province, an



initiative group (Sr. Mel Ryley, Sr. Elisângela Ferreira Belo and Sr. Josephine Corpuz)) got started. Agreements were made during an ICC in 2019 in Chicago. These agreements have become increasingly concrete in recent years. There are regular online meetings between the initiative group and the superiors of the three participating countries (Brazil, the Philippines and the USA). All sisters, associates and Friends have also spoken to each other online. The first effort was to arrive at a common language: English. That is why Sr. Janice's teaches Brazilian sisters the English language. By now sr. Jessica Magno from the Philippines arrived in Brazil, where she will focus on the English conversation with the Brazilian sisters. At the same time she is learning Portuguese. Together, online meetings are taking place in which each other's strengths and weaknesses are discussed.

The starting point has been chosen for the six principles that were embraced by the Congregation in 1969: pluriformity, collegiality, subsidiarity, decentralization, solidarity and co-responsibility.

These points are also discussed together.

The provincialate will be established in Brazil. There are ideas about the organization of the province, whereby each country has a representative on the board. The formation team is also built up in this way. Because each country has its own financial responsibility, there will be no joint budget. The provincial leadership examines the separate budget of the three parts.

There are still several decisions to be made before an international province is a fact. The initiative group is preparing a report to be presented to the General Chapter.

Term coordinator younger parts

In our congregation there are two kinds of coordinators. One leads a group of sisters on their way to becoming a province and the other leads a group of sisters to completion. The process to appoint a coordinator is the same for both: all sisters have a say in the choice. The General Council appoints the coordinator.

The coordinator on the way to completion stays on until she stops. In consultation with the General Council, will be decided how to proceed.

It is different for the group of sisters who want to become a province. The choice of the coordinator is the same, but the term of office is set at 4 years with the possibility to extend it once. The coordinator is evaluated annually during a working visit by the General Council.

Structure

In the Congregation we speak of a community under the responsibility of the General Council, a pre-province, a province, a post-province and a religious house. Five names for communities in eight countries. Terms that no longer correspond to the reality of how we live.



Terms that have a hierarchical load. As a congregation we have respect and appreciation for every part. All parts are equally valuable and are on an equal footing. Together we form one SCMM!

One suitable name will be sought for all parts that are not a province.

190 years of SCMM

The General Chapter takes place in the year in which the Congregation celebrates its 190th anniversary. On the occasion of this jubilee, the General Council has written a prayer and sent it to all sisters with the intention of praying it worldwide on November 23. The prayer consists of 190 words in all languages. Each word symbolizes 1 year in the existence of the Congregation.



General Chapter 2023

The General Chapter will be held from 4 to 14 July 2023 in ZIN (Vught). All sisters will be further informed about this in January 2023. During the ICB, topics that could be discussed were discussed:

- Leadership
- Charisma & spirituality
- Lay involvement
- Missionary tasks
- International Province
- Formation
- Heritage
- Communication
- International meetings.



Ideas have been put forward to involve all sisters in the various parts in the general chapter. The lay will also be involved.

Moving Generalate and General Council

It has often been stated that the General Council is making plans to move to Tilburg after the General Chapter. It is the intention that the members of the General Council each rent an apartment in the complex on the Oude Dijk or the Kloosterstraat where they will live. A number of apartments are rented for the Generalate, which are located next to each other so that the office function is not spread over the building.

Closing

At the end of the meeting, the conclusion was that this ICB is fertile ground for the coming chapter. The members saw resilience and have confidence in the future. Sr. Hermin indicated that there have been good discussions that give direction to the coming year. From all those conversations, 'hope' turned out to be the carrier for our future. Concerns have been raised. Concerns about completion in the older parts and development in the young parts. How will that go? Can the General Council comply with the interpretation of the questions that come from these sisters? We also tasted hope in this. Hope to find good solutions along the way.

Celebration of SCMM's 190th anniversary

Each part celebrated its anniversary in its own way. The General Council was put in the spotlight by the employees of the Generalate. The sisters were also present at the celebration in the Dutch province, in Tilburg.



